

Incorporated's five programming categories: National Trends and Services, The Arts, Services to Youth, International Trends and Services, and Health and Human Services.

The National Trends and Services facet of the Columbus (GA) Chapter champions the idea of empowering both the individual and the community through events such as a week-long community celebration that illustrates the positive impacts of diversity and multiculturalism. Displayed everywhere from government centers to schools to churches, The Links, Incorporated promotes ethnic pluralism within the community.

In addition, The Links were the first to gather local black entrepreneurs and prospective customers together in order to explore shared interests and encourage the potential for reciprocal benefits. The organization also takes the time to honor the lifeblood of local communities: trash collectors, school bus operators, postal carriers, and cafeteria workers. It seeks to recognize every aspect of a community, understanding that everyone deserves respect and gratitude for the vital roles they play in keeping the community afloat.

The International Trends and Services arm of the Columbus (GA) Chapter brings resources to countries across Africa through well-building and providing clean birth kits to those in Uganda and survival kits to women in Haiti. The organization's dedication to domestic and international service showcases the depth of its commitment to community betterment through public service.

The Columbus (GA) Chapter has instituted numerous programs under its Services to Youth facet, including a mentor program for kids in kindergarten to young adults in college. Additionally, Services to Youth promotes the values of higher education by raising interest in STEM education and career paths by awarding scholarships, creating endowments, and supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

In line with its mission to promote cultural awareness through The Arts program, the Columbus (GA) Chapter partners with a number of arts institutions, such as museums, art councils, symphonies, and educational institutes to reinforce the importance of a strong minority presence in the art community.

Last, but certainly not least, the Health and Human Services facet of the Columbus (GA) Chapter works to implement and maintain community services to address the disparities in health conditions negatively impacting minorities. In this regard, the Columbus (GA) Chapter has joined forces with Linkages to Life, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Walk for Healthy Living, and the National Childhood Obesity Initiative.

Through the wisdom and strong leadership of its past fourteen presidents, the Columbus (GA) Chapter has given back so much to the African-American community and, in turn, the community as a whole. Today, the Chapter is led by current president, Olive Gibson Vidal-Kendall and boasts 33 spirited and outstanding members who provide over 1,500 hours of service each year.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing 50 years of incredible and inspiring work by the Columbus (GA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated. The services this organization has provided to the greater Columbus community are immeasurable and there is no doubt in my mind that

The Links, Incorporated will continue its worthy mission of promoting hope and prosperity for years to come.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I was traveling with President Obama and was unable to be present for Roll Call Vote numbers 552 and 553, the Motion to Recommit and Final Passage of H.R. 5781, The California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014.

Had I been present, I would have voted Yes on Roll Call 552 and No on Roll Call 553.

#### HONORING ATTORNEY WILL ELLIS PITTMAN

#### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Attorney Will Ellis Pittman.

Attorney Pittman was born and raised in Tutwiler, MS. Mr. Pittman is 51 years old. He is the owner and managing member of Pittman & Associates, PLLC law firm in Clarksdale, Mississippi where he also serves as the first African-American County Prosecutor for Coahoma County. Attorney Pittman also serves as the board attorney for the Tunica County Board of Supervisors and is the first African-American to represent the Tunica County Board of Supervisors. Attorney Pittman is recognized amongst family, his community, and his colleagues as a man of wisdom, service, a generous spirit, and passion. He regularly attends and serves on the finance committee of the Galena Missionary Baptist Church in Tutwiler, Mississippi which he grew up in and joined at eight years of age.

Ellis attended and graduated from public high school in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. After earning his high school diploma, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. While in the Marine Corps, Ellis married his high school sweet heart, and they had two (2) children. After being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Ellis returned to his home town in Tutwiler.

However, he was unable to find employment anywhere in the delta area. Ellis returned to work and earned a living on the plantation in Tallahatchie County where he grew up. Ellis worked six (6) sometimes seven (7) days a week to provide food, shelter, and the bare necessities for his family. He always knew that if given the opportunity, he would provide them with a better way of life.

After working one full year and saving every penny that he could, Ellis departed for Dallas, Texas where he obtained a job with a janitorial service, cleaning grocery stores at night. Within two months Ellis saved enough funds for a deposit and first months' rent on an apartment. He then returned to Mississippi to get his wife and child and they returned to Dallas, Texas. Within six months, the store at which

Ellis was employed took notice of his hard work and daily attendance and the store manager offered him a job as an apprentice baker that provided health insurance, dental, and vision benefits for both him and his family. With this break, Ellis used the extra earnings to provide a better place for his family to stay. Within six months, Ellis had worked his way from an apprentice baker to a journeyman baker and was able to provide his family with the kind of things that he had always dreamed of having.

Although he excelled in his employment, Ellis realized that in order to do more for his family he would have to obtain a college education. At the same time, Ellis desired to return home to be with his elderly father who became ill. So, he applied for and was hired with the Mississippi Department of Corrections as a correctional officer trainee.

He then made plans to attend Mississippi Valley State University to obtain a college degree. Prior to applying to Mississippi Valley State University, the Pittman's home caught on fire in which Ellis received second and third degree burns over a large portion of his body. His wife received severe burns as well. After a month, she passed away from the injuries she sustained from the fire. Ellis remained in the Greenville Burn Center for a month and half before he was released. After a short period of time, he returned to his place of employment at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. The home that he had purchased for his family had burned down, so the Department of Corrections provided him with a house on the ground for him and his two minor sons to live.

At this point, he made the decision not to attend Mississippi Valley State University due to the drive because he would have to commute. Being a single parent and still having to work, Ellis applied to Delta State University which was closer to where he was living at the penitentiary and he could make the daily commute. He commuted five days a week for three years until he graduated from Delta State University with a degree in criminal justice and political science.

Prior to graduation from Delta State University, Ellis applied to law school at Mississippi College, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, and the University Of Mississippi School Of Law. He was accepted for admission at all three law schools. However, he chose to attend the University of Mississippi—School of Law due to the financial aid available for African-American applicants. After obtaining his law degree and license to practice law, Ellis returned to the Mississippi Delta from Memphis, Tennessee and opened Pittman Law Office in Clarksdale, Mississippi in 1996 where he continues to practice to this day.

Ellis has given countless young lawyers, that have recently graduated with no experience and unable to find a job, a position at his law office to give them a start. He realized that most people will do well if given the chance which he learned from personal experience when he needed someone to give him a chance. There has not been a time when a newly admitted lawyer came to Ellis looking for job and was turned down for employment.

Ellis' practice has included representing countless individuals in cases for excessive force, employment discrimination, criminal defense, family law, as well as personal injury and wrongful death.

Attorney Will Ellis Pittman's work ethic, passion, dedication, dependability, and service